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80298 München

Bremen, 7 October 2004
Our Ref.: MA 7549-01WO JOE/ksc
Applicant: MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC INDUSTRIAL CO., LTD.
Serial Number: PCT/JP03/009648

In response to the official communication dated 13 September 2004

On behalf of the applicants we hereby request a term extension of one month, i.e. until

13 November 2004

for filing a written reply, in particular for filing amendments in accordance with Rule 66.3 PCT.

However, already now we hereby request on behalf of the applicants

detailed substantive examination

and request that the examiner shall draw up a second written opinion based on the amendments that we will file until 13 November 2004.


(Jochen Ehlers)
Association No. 15

Bremen
Patentanwälte
European Patent Attorneys
Dipl.-Ing. Günther Eisenführ
Dipl.-Ing. Dieter K. Speiser
Dr.-Ing. Werner W. Rabus
Dipl.-Ing. Jürgen Brügge (-2003)
Dipl.-Ing. Jürgen Klinghardt
Dipl.-Ing. Klaus G. Göken
Jochen Ehlers
Dipl.-Ing. Mark Andres
Dipl.-Chem. Dr. Uwe Stilkenböhmer
Dipl.-Ing. Stephan Keck
Dipl.-Ing. Johannes M. B. Wasilijeff
Dipl.-Biotechnol. Heiko Sendrowski
Patentanwälte
Dipl.-Ing. Marc Gültzow
Dr.-Ing. Lars Birken

Rechtsanwälte
Ulrich H. Sander
Christian Spintig
Sabine Richter
Harald A. Förster

Postfach 10 60 78
D-28060 Bremen
Martinistrasse 24
D-28195 Bremen
Tel. +49-(0)421-3635 0
Fax +49-(0)421-3378 788 (G3)
Fax +49-(0)421-3288 631 (G4)
mail@eisenfuhr.com
http://www.eisenfuhr.com

München
Patentanwälte
European Patent Attorneys
Dipl.-Phys. Heinz Nöth
Dipl.-Wirt.-Ing. Rainer Fritzsche
Lbm.-Chem. Gabriele Leißler-Gerstl
Dipl.-Ing. Olaf Ungerer
Patentanwälte
Dipl.-Chem. Dr. Peter Schuler
Dipl.-Phys. Dr. Matthias Achler

Berlin
Patentanwälte
European Patent Attorneys
Dipl.-Ing. Henning Christiansen (-2003)
Dipl.-Ing. Joachim von Oppen
Dipl.-Ing. Jutta Kaden
Dipl.-Phys. Dr. Ludger Eckey
Patentanwalt
Dipl.-Chem. Dr. Jan Neigenfink

Hamburg
Patentanwalt
European Patent Attorney
Dipl.-Phys. Frank Meier

Rechtsanwälte
Rainer Böhm
Nicol Ehlers, LL.M.
Mirja-Maren Giese, LL.M.

Alicante
European Trademark Attorney
Dipl.-Ing. Jürgen Klinghardt

Europäisches Patentamt

80298 München

Bremen, 3 November 2004

Our Ref.: MA 7549-01WO JOE/JUN/ksc/ac

Applicant: MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC INDUSTRIAL CO., LTD.
Serial Number: PCT/JP03/09648

In response to the official communication dated 13 September 2004

It is herewith forwarded

- new claims 1-40 which shall replace – without prejudice –
originally filed claims 1-43.

1. Original disclosure of the amendments

The subject matter of new claim 1 is disclosed in original claims 1 and 2. New claims 2 – 10 correspond to original claims 3 – 11. New claim 11 is based on original claims 12 and 17; new claim 12 is based on originally filed claims 13 and 17 and new claim 14 is based on originally filed claims 15 and 17. New claim 13 corresponds to original claim 14. New claim 15 corresponds to original claim 16 and now includes a reference to new claim 14. New claims 16 and 17 correspond to originally filed claims 18 and 19. New claims 18 and 19 are based on a combination of originally filed claims 20 and 24, and originally filed claims 21 and 23, respectively. New claims 20 – 39 correspond to original

Patentanwälte
European Patent Attorneys
Dipl.-Ing. Günther Eisenführ
Dipl.-Ing. Dieter K. Speiser
Dr.-Ing. Werner W. Rabus
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Dipl.-Ing. Jürgen Klinghardt
Dipl.-Ing. Klaus G. Göken
Jochen Ehlers
Dipl.-Ing. Mark Andres
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Dipl.-Ing. Johannes M. B. Wasiljeff
Dipl.-Biotechnol. Heiko Sendrowski
Patentanwalt
Dipl.-Ing. Marc Gültzow

Rechtsanwälte
Ulrich H. Sander
Christian Spintig
Sabine Richter
Harald A. Förster

Postfach 10 60 78
D-28060 Bremen
Martinistrasse 24
D-28195 Bremen
Tel. +49-(0)421-3635 0
Fax +49-(0)421-3378 788 (G3)
Fax +49-(0)421-3288 631 (G4)
mail@eisenfuhr.com
http://www.eisenfuhr.com

München
Patentanwälte
European Patent Attorneys
Dipl.-Phys. Heinz Nöth
Dipl.-Wirt.-Ing. Rainer Fritzsche
Lbm.-Chem. Gabriele Leißler-Gerstl
Dipl.-Ing. Olaf Ungerer
Patentanwälte
Dipl.-Chem. Dr. Peter Schuler
Dipl.-Phys. Dr. Matthias Achler
Dipl.-Ing. Michael F. P. Müller

Berlin
Patentanwälte
European Patent Attorneys
Dipl.-Ing. Henning Christiansen (-2003)
Dipl.-Ing. Joachim von Oppen
Dipl.-Ing. Jutta Kaden
Dipl.-Phys. Dr. Ludger Eckey
Patentanwalt
Dipl.-Chem. Dr. Jan Neigenfink

Hamburg
Patentanwalt
European Patent Attorney
Dipl.-Phys. Frank Meier
Patentanwalt
Dr.-Ing. Lars Birken

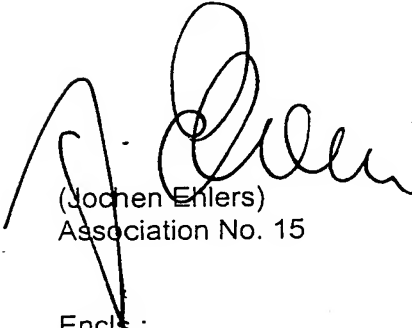
Rechtsanwälte
Rainer Böhm
Nicol Ehlers, LL.M.
Mirja-Maren Giese, LL.M.

Alicante
European Trademark Attorney
Dipl.-Ing. Jürgen Klinghardt

claims 22 – 41, wherein new claim 40 is based on a combination of original claims 42 and 43.

2. As to the further examination procedure

The examiner is respectfully requested to draw up a second written opinion based on the attached new amended claims.



(Jochen Ehlers)
Association No. 15

Encls.:

- 1 set of claims 1-40 (manuscript copy)
- 1 set of claims 1-40 (clear copy)

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New claims (clear copy)

1. A method of thermal analysis, wherein heating characteristic at any measuring point of an object at any measuring location of a heating furnace is determined as a single invariable by using temperature measured at the measuring point of the object and heating temperature and heating time at the measuring location of the heating furnace, which heating characteristic represents physical characteristics of both of the heating furnace and the object to be heated, wherein changes of said physical characteristics and/or defects of the heating furnace are detected by obtaining said invariable periodically and analyzing variance of said heating characteristic.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein changes of the physical characteristics and/or defects of a specific heating furnace are detected by obtaining said invariables from a plurality of heating furnaces and comparing said heating characteristics of said plurality of heating furnaces among each other.
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein temperature profile of the object when the object is heated under given heating condition is simulated by using the invariable.
4. A method according to claim 1, wherein appropriate heating condition of the heating furnace for heating the object in accordance with a required temperature profile is determined by using the invariable.

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein appropriate heating condition for each of a plurality of heating sections structured in the heating furnace for heating the object in accordance with a required temperature profile are determined by using the invariable obtained from at least one measuring location for each of the plurality of heating sections.

6. A method according to claim 3, wherein said heating condition comprises either one of heating temperature, heating time, transfer speed of the object in the heating furnace, or blowing speed of heated air for heating the object, or any combination thereof.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein said heating furnace is either one of reflow furnace, heat treatment furnace, sintering furnace, baking oven, melting furnace, or incinerating equipment.

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein said invariable is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein \ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein temperature T_s of the object is determined when heating temperature T_a and heating time t of the heating furnace are given, or heating temperature T_a and heating time t are determined when required temperature T_s is given by using said m-values based on a following basic equation for heating:

$$T_s = T_a - (T_a - T_{int}) e^{-m \cdot t}$$

wherein e in the equation represents the base of natural logarithms.

10. A method according to claim 8, wherein said m-value is adjusted based on a predetermined equation of relationship between the blowing speed of the

heated air and the m-value when the blowing speed of the heated air of the heating furnace is changed.

11. A method of thermal analysis for determining appropriate heating condition for heating an object in a heating furnace in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, wherein said method comprises steps of:

determining a sample object to be heated and heating condition of the heating furnace;

determining required conditions for heating the object;

heating the sample object, and measuring temperature of at least one measuring point of the sample object at a plurality of measuring locations of said heating furnace;

calculating heating characteristic value for each measuring point at each measuring location based on measured temperature of the measuring point as well as heating temperature and heating time at each measuring location;

modifying the heating condition by changing either one of or both of the heating temperature and the heating time of at least one of the measuring locations;

simulating temperature of each measuring point of the object at each measuring location of the heating furnace under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values based on a basic equation for heating;

determining that the modified heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile when a temperature profile developed from the simulated temperature meets said required conditions, and

re-modifying the heating condition when the developed temperature profile does not meet said required conditions, and repeating the above procedures until the developed temperature profile meets the required conditions, wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein \ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.

12. A method of thermal analysis for determining appropriate heating condition for heating an object in a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, wherein said method comprises steps of:

- determining a sample object to be heated and heating condition of each heating section of the heating furnace;

- determining required conditions for heating the object;

- heating the sample object, and measuring temperature of at least one measuring point of the sample object at at least one measuring location of each of the heating sections of the heating furnace;

- calculating heating characteristic value for each measuring point at each measuring location based on the measured temperature of the measuring point as well as heating temperature and heating time at each measuring location;

- modifying the heating condition by changing either one of or both of the heating temperature and the heating time of at least one of the heating sections;

- simulating temperature of each measuring point of the object at each measuring location of the heating furnace under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values based on a basic equation for heating;

- determining that the modified heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile when a temperature profile developed from the simulated temperature meets said required conditions, and

- re-modifying the heating condition when the developed temperature profile does not meet said required conditions, and repeating the above procedures until the developed temperature profile meets the required conditions,

wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.

13. A method according to claim 11, wherein said heating furnace is either one of reflow furnace, heat treatment furnace, sintering furnace, baking oven, melting furnace, or incinerating equipment.

14. A method of thermal analysis for determining appropriate heating condition for heating an object comprising a circuit substrate having printed solder thereon while the object is transferred in a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections, forming a preheat stage and a reflow stage in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, wherein said method comprising steps of:

- determining a sample object to be heated and heating condition of each heating section of the heating furnace;

- determining required conditions for heating the object in both of the preheat stage and the reflow stage;

- heating the sample object, and measuring temperature of at least one measuring point of the sample object at at least one measuring location of each of the heating sections of the heating furnace;

- calculating heating characteristic value for each measuring point at each measuring location based on measured temperature of the measuring point as well as heating temperature and heating time at each measuring location;

- modifying the heating condition by changing either one of or both of the heating temperature and the heating time of at least one of the heating sections;

- simulating temperature of each measuring point of the object at each measuring location of the heating furnace under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values based on a basic equa-

tion for heating;

determining that the modified heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile when a temperature profile developed from the simulated temperature meets said required conditions of both of the preheat stage and the reflow stage, and

re-modifying the heating condition when the developed temperature profile does not meet said required conditions of the preheat stage or the reflow stage, and repeating the above procedures until the developed temperature profile meets the required conditions,

wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein \ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein the method further comprises steps of:

verifying the heating condition which has met the predetermined required conditions through simulation by actually heating the sample object under the same heating condition and measuring temperature at each measuring point of the sample object at each measuring location of said heating furnace, before determining that such heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile;

determining that the verified heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile when a temperature profile developed at the verification step meets the required conditions, and

re-calculating the heating characteristic value for each measuring point at each measuring location based on the results of the verification step when the developed temperature profile at the verification step does not meet the required conditions, and repeating the above procedures until the developed temperature profile meets the required conditions.

16. A method according to claim 11, wherein the basic equation for heating is defined by:

$$T_s = T_a - (T_a - T_{int}) e^{-m \cdot t}$$

wherein T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, t is heating time at the measuring location, m is the corresponding heating characteristic value, and e is the base of natural logarithms.

17. A method according to claim 11, wherein said required conditions for heating the object includes either one of, or any combination of:

(a) targeted heating temperature and heating time for keeping the object at a certain temperature for a certain length of time so as to achieve the purpose of heating;

(b) required upper end temperature that the object needs to achieve during heating;

(c) maximum temperature, which is the temperature the object should not go over for sustaining its function;

(d) allowable limited temperature and time that the object may endure during heating process;

(e) preheat temperature and time required for heating the object prior to heating for the ultimate purpose, and

(f) allowable temperature variation among a plurality of measuring points of the object.

18. A program for making a computer to process steps of determining appropriate heating condition of a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections for heating an object in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, said steps comprising:

obtaining heating characteristic value of at least one measuring location of each of said plurality of heating sections calculated from heating temperature and heating time at said measuring location as well as measured temperature of at least one measuring point of the object when the object is heated under certain heating condition at said measuring location,

electing one measuring point which has achieved the highest temperature during the heating among all the measuring points, and confirming whether temperature of the elected measuring point is not over the upper limit of the required conditions (confirmation step A);

when temperature of the elected measuring point is over the required conditions at the confirmation step A, modifying the heating condition by lowering the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when temperature of the elected measuring point is not over the required conditions at the confirmation step A, confirming whether or not the elected measuring point meets heating time of the required conditions (confirmation step B);

when the heating time of the elected measuring point falls short of the required conditions at the confirmation step B, modifying the heating condition by raising the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule or by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using said corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when the heating time of the elected measuring point goes over the required conditions at the confirmation step B, modifying the heating condition by lowering the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule or by shortening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when the heating time of the elected measuring point meet the required conditions at the confirmation step B, confirming whether or not all the other measuring points meet the required conditions (confirmation step C);

when any one of the measuring points does not meet the required conditions at the confirmation step C, modifying the heating condition by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule or by raising the heating tem-

perature based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when all the measuring points meet the required conditions at the confirmation step C, determining that such heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile,

wherein the program further includes a logic of making a judgment that determining appropriate heating condition for heating the object in accordance with the required temperature profile is impossible when number of repeating procedures in a closed loop at any of the confirmation steps A-C exceeds a predetermined times.

19. A program for making a computer to process steps of determining appropriate heating condition of a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections for heating an object in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, said steps comprising:

obtaining heating characteristic value of at least one measuring location of each of said plurality of heating sections calculated from heating temperature and heating time at said measuring location as well as measured temperature of at least one measuring point of the object when the object is heated under certain heating condition at said measuring location,

electing one measuring point, as a critical measuring point, which has achieved the lowest temperature during the heating among all the measuring points,

detecting heating condition of each of the heating sections which may make said critical measuring point to satisfy both of the required upper end temperature that the object needs to achieve and the maximum temperature that the object should no go over, by simulating temperature of the critical measuring point by using the corresponding heating characteristic value for each of the measuring locations based on a predetermined algorithm,

confirming whether any of the detected heating conditions at the detecting step meet targeted heating temperature and heating time that the object needs to clear for fulfilling the purpose of heating (confirmation step D);

when none of the detected heating conditions meet the targeted heating temperature and heating time at the confirmation step D, modifying the heating condition by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the step of electing the critical measuring point;

when any of the detected heating conditions meet the targeted heating temperature and heating time at the confirmation step D, confirming whether such detected heating condition(s) meet other required conditions of allowable limited temperature and time that the object may endure during heating (confirmation step E);

when none of the detected heating condition(s) meet the allowable limited temperature and time at the confirmation step E, modifying the heating condition by shortening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the step of electing the critical measuring point;

when any one of the detected heating condition(s) meet the allowable limited temperature and time at the confirmation step E, temporarily electing one detected heating condition that has cleared the allowable limited temperature and time requirement by the shortest time among all the detected heating condition(s) as the appropriate heating condition for satisfying the required temperature profile;

confirming whether all the other measuring points meet the required conditions by simulating temperatures under the temporarily elected heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values of the other measuring points (confirmation step F);

when none of the measuring points meet the required conditions at the confirmation step F, modifying the temporarily elected heating condition by shortening heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature of each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the step of electing the critical measuring point, and

when all the measuring points meet the required conditions at the confirmation step F, determining that the temporarily elected heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile, wherein when none of heating conditions for the critical measuring point could meet the targeted heating temperature and time requirement at the confirmation step D during the course of the repeated procedures after it was found at the confirmation step F that none of the measuring points meet the required conditions of the second heating stage, and modification of the heating condition was made by shortening heating time, the program further includes a logic of determining approximately appropriate heating condition by lengthening the heating time of the latest temporarily elected heating condition based on a predetermined rule.

20. A program for making a computer to process steps of determining appropriate heating condition of a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections forming a first and a second heating stages for heating an object in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for each of the first and the second stages, said steps comprising:

obtaining heating characteristic value for at least one measuring location of each of said plurality of heating sections calculated from heating temperature and heating time at said measuring location as well as measured temperature of at least one measuring point of the object when the object is heated under certain heating condition at the measuring location,

electing one measuring point which has achieved the highest temperature during heating at the first heating stage among all the measuring points, and confirming whether temperature of the elected measuring point is not over the upper limit of the required conditions (confirmation step A);

when temperature of the elected measuring point is over the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step A, modifying the heating condition by lowering the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when temperature of the elected measuring point is not over the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step A, confirming

whether or not the elected measuring point meets heating time of the required conditions of the first heating stage (confirmation step B);

when the heating time of the elected measuring point falls short of the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step B, modifying the heating condition by raising the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule or by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when the heating time of the elected measuring point goes over the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step B, modifying the heating condition of the first heating stage by lowering the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule or by shortening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when the heating time of the elected measuring point meet the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step B, confirming whether or not all the other measuring points meet the required conditions of the first heating stage (confirmation step C);

when any one of the measuring points does not meet the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step C, modifying the heating condition by lengthening the heating time of the first heating stage based on a predetermined rule or by raising the heating temperature of the first heating stage based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when all the measuring points meet the required conditions for the first heating stage at the confirmation step C, electing one measuring point, as a critical measuring point, which has achieved the lowest temperature at the second heating stage during heating among all the measuring points;

detecting heating condition of each of the heating sections in the second heating stage which may make said critical measuring point to satisfy both of the

required upper end temperature that the object needs to achieve and the maximum temperature that the object should not go over, by simulating temperature of the critical measuring point by using the corresponding heating characteristic value for each of the measuring locations in the second heating stage based on a predetermined algorithm,

confirming whether or not any of the detected heating conditions at the detecting step meet targeted heating temperature and heating time that the object needs to clear for fulfilling the purpose of heating (confirmation step D);

when none of the detected heating conditions meet the targeted heating temperature and heating time at the confirmation step D, modifying the heating condition by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures either from the step of electing the critical measuring point or from the confirmation step A;

when any one of the detected heating conditions meet the targeted heating temperature and heating time at the confirmation step D, confirming whether such detected heating condition(s) meet other required conditions of allowable limited temperature and time that the object may endure during heating (confirmation step E);

when none of the detected heating condition(s) meet the allowable limited temperature and time at the confirmation step E, modifying the heating condition by shortening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures either from the step of electing the critical measuring point or from the confirmation step A;

when any one of the detected heating condition (s) meet the allowable limited temperature and time at the confirmation step E, temporarily electing one detected heating condition that has cleared the allowable limited temperature and time requirement by the shortest time among all the detected heating condition(s) as the appropriate heating condition for satisfying the required temperature profile;

confirming whether all the other measuring points meet the required condi-

tions of the second heating stage by simulating temperatures under the temporarily elected heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values of the other measuring points (confirmation step F);

when any of the measuring points do not meet the required conditions of the second heating stage at the confirmation step F, modifying the temporarily elected heating condition by shortening heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature of each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures either from the step of electing the critical measuring point or from the confirmation step A; and

when all the measuring points meet the required conditions for the second heating stage at the confirmation step F, determining that the temporarily elected heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile.

21. A program according to claim 20, wherein when none of heating conditions for the critical measuring point could meet the targeted heating temperature and time requirement at the confirmation step D during the course of the repeated procedures after it was found at the confirmation step F that none of the measuring points meet the required conditions of the second heating stage, and modification of the heating condition was made by shortening heating time, the program further includes a logic of determining approximately appropriate heating condition by lengthening the heating time of the latest temporarily elected heating condition based on a predetermined rule.

22. A program according to claim 20, wherein the program further includes a logic of making a judgment that determining appropriate heating condition for heating the object in accordance with the required temperature profile is impossible when number of repeating procedures in a closed loop at any of the confirmation steps A-F exceeds a predetermined times.

23. A program according to claim 20, wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein \ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location, and simulating temperature of each of measuring point using the corresponding heating characteristic value is made based on a following basic equation for heating:

$$T_s = T_a - (T_a - T_{int}) e^{-m \cdot t}$$

wherein e in the equation represents the base of natural logarithms.

24. A program according to claim 20, wherein the predetermined rule for lowering the heating temperature when temperature of the elected measuring point is over the required conditions at the confirmation step A is either lowering the heating temperature down to the upper end temperature of the allowable range of the required heating conditions, or lowering the heating temperature by an amount obtained by multiplying a certain ratio to a temperature difference identified between the measured or simulated temperature and the upper end temperature of the allowable range.

25. A program according to claim 20, wherein the predetermined rule for raising or lowering the heating temperature when heating time of the elected measuring point falls short of or goes over the required conditions at the confirmation step B is either raising or lowering the heating temperature of the particular heating section(s) by a predetermined amount, which particular heating section(s) are those located in advance of the heating section where temperature of the elected measuring point reaches the allowable range of the required conditions.

26. A program according to claim 20, wherein the predetermined rule for lengthening heating time when any one of the measuring points does not meet the required conditions at the confirmation step C is to multiply preceding transfer speed of the object with a ratio closest to 1 among the ratios of required heating time versus measured or simulated heating time for each of the measuring points which failed to meet the required conditions, or to divide the preceding heating time by the same ratio.

27. A program according to claim 20, wherein the predetermined algorithm for detecting heating conditions for making the critical measuring point to satisfy both of the required upper end temperature and the maximum temperature is configured by the steps of:

creating combinations of heating condition of at least two heating sections by raising respective heating temperatures independently by every predetermined amount from the initial temperature of the object at the beginning of the heating section up to a predetermined upper limit temperature defined by the heating furnace;

simulating temperature of the critical measuring point under each of the created combinations of the heating condition, and developing temperature profiles corresponding to each of the combinations of the heating condition; and

detecting any of the combinations of the heating condition which may make the corresponding simulated temperature to locate inside a zone defined by said at least two heating sections, which zone is surrounded by an upper boundary and a lower boundary, wherein the upper boundary comprising an temperature increase line between a point H of an initial temperature of the preceding heating section and a point E of the maximum temperature at the end of the same heating section as well as a line of the maximum temperature between said point E and a point G at the end of said at least two heating sections, while the lower boundary comprising a line between said point H and a point F of the required upper end temperature at the end of said at least two heating sections.

28. A program according to claim 20, wherein the predetermined rule for lengthening the heating time when none of the heating conditions meet the required time conditions at the confirmation step D is to multiply preceding transfer speed of the object with a ratio closest to 1 among the ratios of the heating time at the targeted heating temperature versus corresponding simulated time for each of the measuring points which failed to meet the required conditions, or to divide the preceding heating time by the same ratio.

29. A program according to claim 20, wherein the predetermined rule for shortening the heating time when none of the heating conditions meet the required time conditions at the confirmation step E is to multiply preceding transfer speed of the object with a ratio closest to 1 among the ratios of heating time at the al-

allowable limited temperature versus corresponding simulated time for each of the measuring points which failed to meet the required conditions, or to divide the preceding heating time by the same ratio.

30. A program according to claim 20, wherein the predetermined rule for shortening the heating time when any of the heating conditions do not meet the required conditions at the confirmation step F is to multiply preceding transfer speed of the object with a ratio closest to 1 among the ratios of the heating time at the targeted heating temperature versus corresponding simulated time, or among the ratios of the heating time at the allowable limited temperature versus corresponding simulated time for each of the measuring points which failed to meet the required condition, or to divide the preceding heating time by the same ratio.

31. A program according to claim 20, wherein in addition to overall required conditions for heating the object which are to be applied equally to any part of the object, individual required conditions are separately determined which are to be applied to corresponding each of the measuring points of the object individually, and the program further includes a logic for making a judgment that even if the heating condition does not meet some requirements of the overall required conditions at some measuring points, such heating conditions are deemed appropriate as far as said individual required conditions to be applied to those particular measuring points are satisfied.

32. A computer readable recording medium recording a program for making a computer to process steps of determining appropriate heating condition for heating an object in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to required conditions for heating the object, wherein said program is defined by claim 20.

33. An apparatus for performing thermal analysis to be used for heating an object in a heating furnace, comprising an input means, a memory and a processor,
wherein said input means obtains information of heating temperature and heating time of the heating furnace and temperature of the object,
said memory stores a logic for calculating heating characteristic value, and

a basic equation for heating or a logic for calculating temperature of the object to be heated by using said heating characteristic value as well as the heating temperature and heating time, and

said processor calculates either said heating characteristic value or temperature of the object corresponding to the heating temperature and the heating time, by using said logics and said basic equation for heating stored in the memory.

34. An apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the apparatus further comprises a reading means for reading recording medium, wherein the processor determines appropriate heating condition including heating temperature and heating time, which may satisfy the required conditions of the object to be heated, by using the required conditions for heating the object obtained by the input means, algorithm that the reading means obtained by reading the recording medium, and the heating characteristic value calculated by the processor.

35. An apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein \ln is natural logarithm, T_a is the heating temperature, T_{int} is initial temperature of the object, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated, and t is the heating time.

36. An apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said basic equation for heating is defined by:

$$T_s = T_a - (T_a - T_{int}) e^{-m \cdot t}$$

wherein T_a is the heating temperature, T_{int} is initial temperature of the object, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated, t is the heating time, e is the base of natural logarithms, and m is the heating characteristic value.

37. A heat controller for determining appropriate heating condition including heating temperature and heating time for each of heating sections structured in a heating furnace, and for controlling the heating furnace based on such determined appropriate heating condition so as to heat an object in accordance with a

required temperature profile corresponding to required conditions for heating the object, said controller comprising an input means, an output means, a memory, a processor and a reading means for reading recording media,

wherein the controller controls the heating furnace by reading recording medium defined by claim 32.

38. A heating furnace for heating an object introduced into the furnace in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to required conditions for heating the object, said heating furnace comprising at least one heating section, a heat source provided to each of the heating sections for heating the object, and a heat controller capable of controlling heating condition for each of the heating sections,

wherein said heat controller is defined by claim 37.

39. A heating furnace according to claim 38, wherein said heating furnace is either one of reflow furnace, heat treatment furnace, sintering furnace, baking oven, melting furnace, and incinerating equipment.

40. A method of thermal analysis, wherein cooling characteristic of at least one measuring point of an object at one measuring location of a cooling equipment is determined as a single invariable by using temperature measured at said at least one measuring point of the object as well as cooling temperature and cooling time at the at least one measuring location of the cooling apparatus, which cooling characteristic represents physical characteristics of both of the cooling equipment and the object to be cooled, wherein appropriate cooling condition of a cooling equipment for cooling the object in accordance with a required temperature profile is determined by using the determined invariables.

Bremen, 3 November 2004

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Applicant: MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC INDUSTRIAL CO., LTD.
Serial Number: PCT/JP03/09648

New claims (manuscript copy)

1. A method of thermal analysis, wherein heating characteristic at any measuring point of an object at any measuring location of a heating furnace is determined as a single invariable by using temperature measured at the measuring point of the object and heating temperature and heating time at the measuring location of the heating furnace, which heating characteristic represents physical characteristics of both of the heating furnace and the object to be heated, wherein changes of said physical characteristics and/or defects of the heating furnace are detected by obtaining said invariable periodically and analyzing variance of said heating characteristic.

~~2. A method according to claim 1, wherein changes of said physical characteristics and/or defects of the heating furnace are detected by obtaining said invariable periodically and analyzing variance of said heating characteristic.~~

32. A method according to claim 1, wherein changes of the physical characteristics and/or defects of a specific heating furnace are detected by obtaining said invariables from a plurality of heating furnaces and comparing said heating characteristics of said plurality of heating furnaces among each other.

43. A method according to claim 1, wherein temperature profile of the object when the object is heated under given heating condition is simulated by using the invariable.

64. A method according to claim 1, wherein appropriate heating condition of the heating furnace for heating the object in accordance with a required temperature profile is determined by using the invariable.

65. A method according to claim 54, wherein appropriate heating condition for each of a plurality of heating sections structured in the heating furnace for heating the object in accordance with a required temperature profile are determined by using the invariable obtained from at least one measuring location for each of the plurality of heating sections.

76. A method according to claim 43, wherein said heating condition comprises either one of heating temperature, heating time, transfer speed of the object in the heating furnace, or blowing speed of heated air for heating the object, or any combination thereof.

87. A method according to claim 1, wherein said heating furnace is either one of reflow furnace, heat treatment furnace, sintering furnace, baking oven, melting furnace, or incinerating equipment.

98. A method according to claim 1, wherein said invariable is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.

409. A method according to claim 98, wherein temperature T_s of the object is determined when heating temperature T_a and heating time t of the heating furnace are given, or heating temperature T_a and heating time t are determined when required temperature T_s is given by using said m-values based on a following basic equation for heating:

$$T_s = T_a - (T_a - T_{int}) e^{-m \cdot t}$$

wherein e in the equation represents the base of natural logarithms.

410. A method according to claim 98, wherein said m-value is adjusted based on a predetermined equation of relationship between the blowing speed of the heated air and the m-value when the blowing speed of the heated air of the heating furnace is changed.

421. A method of thermal analysis for determining appropriate heating condition for heating an object in a heating furnace in accordance with a required temperature profile correspond-

ing to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, wherein said method comprises steps of:

determining a sample object to be heated and heating condition of the heating furnace;

determining required conditions for heating the object;

heating the sample object, and measuring temperature of at least one measuring point of the sample object at a plurality of measuring locations of said heating furnace;

calculating heating characteristic value for each measuring point at each measuring location based on measured temperature of the measuring point as well as heating temperature and heating time at each measuring location;

modifying the heating condition by changing either one of or both of the heating temperature and the heating time of at least one of the measuring locations;

simulating temperature of each measuring point of the object at each measuring location of the heating furnace under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values based on a basic equation for heating;

determining that the modified heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile when a temperature profile developed from the simulated temperature meets said required conditions, and

re-modifying the heating condition when the developed temperature profile does not meet said required conditions, and repeating the above procedures until the developed temperature profile meets the required conditions.

wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right] -$$

wherein \ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.

4312. A method of thermal analysis for determining appropriate heating condition for heating an object in a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, wherein said method comprises steps of:

determining a sample object to be heated and heating condition of each heating section of the heating furnace;

determining required conditions for heating the object;

heating the sample object, and measuring temperature of at least one measuring

point of the sample object at at least one measuring location of each of the heating sections of the heating furnace;

calculating heating characteristic value for each measuring point at each measuring location based on the measured temperature of the measuring point as well as heating temperature and heating time at each measuring location;

modifying the heating condition by changing either one of or both of the heating temperature and the heating time of at least one of the heating sections;

simulating temperature of each measuring point of the object at each measuring location of the heating furnace under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values based on a basic equation for heating;

determining that the modified heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile when a temperature profile developed from the simulated temperature meets said required conditions, and

re-modifying the heating condition when the developed temperature profile does not meet said required conditions, and repeating the above procedures until the developed temperature profile meets the required conditions,

wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right] -$$

wherein \ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.

4413. A method according to claim 4211, wherein said heating furnace is either one of reflow furnace, heat treatment furnace, sintering furnace, baking oven, melting furnace; or incinerating equipment.

4514. A method of thermal analysis for determining appropriate heating condition for heating an object comprising a circuit substrate having printed solder thereon while the object is transferred in a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections, forming a preheat stage and a reflow stage in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, wherein said method comprising steps of:

determining a sample object to be heated and heating condition of each heating section of the heating furnace;

determining required conditions for heating the object in both of the preheat stage and

the reflow stage;

heating the sample object, and measuring temperature of at least one measuring point of the sample object at at least one measuring location of each of the heating sections of the heating furnace;

calculating heating characteristic value for each measuring point at each measuring location based on measured temperature of the measuring point as well as heating temperature and heating time at each measuring location;

modifying the heating condition by changing either one of or both of the heating temperature and the heating time of at least one of the heating sections;

simulating temperature of each measuring point of the object at each measuring location of the heating furnace under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values based on a basic equation for heating;

determining that the modified heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile when a temperature profile developed from the simulated temperature meets said required conditions of both of the preheat stage and the reflow stage, and

re-modifying the heating condition when the developed temperature profile does not meet said required conditions of the preheat stage or the reflow stage, and repeating the above procedures until the developed temperature profile meets the required conditions, wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right] -$$

wherein \ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.

4615. A method according to claim 4214, wherein the method further comprises steps of:

verifying the heating condition which has met the predetermined required conditions through simulation by actually heating the sample object under the same heating condition and measuring temperature at each measuring point of the sample object at each measuring location of said heating furnace, before determining that such heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile;

determining that the verified heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile when a temperature profile developed at the verification step meets the required conditions, and

re-calculating the heating characteristic value for each measuring point at each

measuring location based on the results of the verification step when the developed temperature profile at the verification step does not meet the required conditions, and repeating the above procedures until the developed temperature profile meets the required conditions.

~~17. A method according to claim 12, wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:—~~

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

~~wherein ln is natural logarithm, Ta is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, Tint is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, Ts is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, and t is heating time at the measuring location.~~

~~16. A method according to claim 11, wherein the basic equation for heating is defined by:~~

$$T_s = T_a - (T_a - T_{int}) e^{-mt}$$

wherein Ta is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, Tint is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, Ts is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location, t is heating time at the measuring location, m is the corresponding heating characteristic value, and e is the base of natural logarithms.

~~17. A method according to claim 11, wherein said required conditions for heating the object includes either one of, or any combination of:~~

- ~~(a) targeted heating temperature and heating time for keeping the object at a certain temperature for a certain length of time so as to achieve the purpose of heating;~~
- ~~(b) required upper end temperature that the object needs to achieve during heating;~~
- ~~(c) maximum temperature, which is the temperature the object should not go over for sustaining its function;~~
- ~~(d) allowable limited temperature and time that the object may endure during heating process;~~
- ~~(e) preheat temperature and time required for heating the object prior to heating for the ultimate purpose, and~~
- ~~(f) allowable temperature variation among a plurality of measuring points of the object.~~

~~18. A program for making a computer to process steps of determining appropriate heating condition of a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections for heating an object in~~

accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, said steps comprising:

obtaining heating characteristic value of at least one measuring location of each of said plurality of heating sections calculated from heating temperature and heating time at said measuring location as well as measured temperature of at least one measuring point of the object when the object is heated under certain heating condition at said measuring location,

electing one measuring point which has achieved the highest temperature during the heating among all the measuring points, and confirming whether temperature of the elected measuring point is not over the upper limit of the required conditions (confirmation step A);

when temperature of the elected measuring point is over the required conditions at the confirmation step A, modifying the heating condition by lowering the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when temperature of the elected measuring point is not over the required conditions at the confirmation step A, confirming whether or not the elected measuring point meets heating time of the required conditions (confirmation step B);

when the heating time of the elected measuring point falls short of the required conditions at the confirmation step B, modifying the heating condition by raising the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule or by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using said corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when the heating time of the elected measuring point goes over the required conditions at the confirmation step B, modifying the heating condition by lowering the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule or by shortening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when the heating time of the elected measuring point meet the required conditions at the confirmation step B, confirming whether or not all the other measuring points meet the required conditions (confirmation step C);

when any one of the measuring points does not meet the required conditions at the confirmation step C, modifying the heating condition by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule or by raising the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by

using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when all the measuring points meet the required conditions at the confirmation step C, determining that such heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile,___

wherein the program further includes a logic of making a judgment that determining appropriate heating condition for heating the object in accordance with the required temperature profile is impossible when number of repeating procedures in a closed loop at any of the confirmation steps A-C exceeds a predetermined times.

2419. A program for making a computer to process steps of determining appropriate heating condition of a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections for heating an object in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for heating the object, said steps comprising:

obtaining heating characteristic value of at least one measuring location of each of said plurality of heating sections calculated from heating temperature and heating time at said measuring location as well as measured temperature of at least one measuring point of the object when the object is heated under certain heating condition at said measuring location,

electing one measuring point, as a critical measuring point, which has achieved the lowest temperature during the heating among all the measuring points,

detecting heating condition of each of the heating sections which may make said critical measuring point to satisfy both of the required upper end temperature that the object needs to achieve and the maximum temperature that the object should no go over, by simulating temperature of the critical measuring point by using the corresponding heating characteristic value for each of the measuring locations based on a predetermined algorithm,

confirming whether any of the detected heating conditions at the detecting step meet targeted heating temperature and heating time that the object needs to clear for fulfilling the purpose of heating (confirmation step D);

when none of the detected heating conditions meet the targeted heating temperature and heating time at the confirmation step D, modifying the heating condition by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the step of electing the critical measuring point;

when any of the detected heating conditions meet the targeted heating temperature and heating time at the confirmation step D, confirming whether such detected heating condition(s) meet other required conditions of allowable limited temperature and time that the

object may endure during heating (confirmation step E);

when none of the detected heating condition(s) meet the allowable limited temperature and time at the confirmation step E, modifying the heating condition by shortening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the step of electing the critical measuring point;

when any one of the detected heating condition(s) meet the allowable limited temperature and time at the confirmation step E, temporarily electing one detected heating condition that has cleared the allowable limited temperature and time requirement by the shortest time among all the detected heating condition(s) as the appropriate heating condition for satisfying the required temperature profile;

confirming whether all the other measuring points meet the required conditions by simulating temperatures under the temporarily elected heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values of the other measuring points (confirmation step F);

when none of the measuring points meet the required conditions at the confirmation step F, modifying the temporarily elected heating condition by shortening heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature of each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the step of electing the critical measuring point, and

when all the measuring points meet the required conditions at the confirmation step F, determining that the temporarily elected heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile,

wherein when none of heating conditions for the critical measuring point could meet the targeted heating temperature and time requirement at the confirmation step D during the course of the repeated procedures after it was found at the confirmation step F that none of the measuring points meet the required conditions of the second heating stage, and modification of the heating condition was made by shortening heating time, the program further includes a logic of determining approximately appropriate heating condition by lengthening the heating time of the latest temporarily elected heating condition based on a predetermined rule.

2220. A program for making a computer to process steps of determining appropriate heating condition of a heating furnace having a plurality of heating sections forming a first and a second heating stages for heating an object in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to predetermined required conditions for each of the first and the second stages, said steps comprising:

obtaining heating characteristic value for at least one measuring location of each of said plurality of heating sections calculated from heating temperature and heating time at said measuring location as well as measured temperature of at least one measuring point of the object when the object is heated under certain heating condition at the measuring location,

electing one measuring point which has achieved the highest temperature during heating at the first heating stage among all the measuring points, and confirming whether temperature of the elected measuring point is not over the upper limit of the required conditions (confirmation step A);

when temperature of the elected measuring point is over the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step A, modifying the heating condition by lowering the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when temperature of the elected measuring point is not over the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step A, confirming whether or not the elected measuring point meets heating time of the required conditions of the first heating stage (confirmation step B);

when the heating time of the elected measuring point falls short of the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step B, modifying the heating condition by raising the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule or by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when the heating time of the elected measuring point goes over the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step B, modifying the heating condition of the first heating stage by lowering the heating temperature based on a predetermined rule or by shortening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when the heating time of the elected measuring point meet the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step B, confirming whether or not all the other measuring points meet the required conditions of the first heating stage (confirmation step C);

when any one of the measuring points does not meet the required conditions of the first heating stage at the confirmation step C, modifying the heating condition by lengthening

the heating time of the first heating stage based on a predetermined rule or by raising the heating temperature of the first heating stage based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature for each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures from the confirmation step A;

when all the measuring points meet the required conditions for the first heating stage at the confirmation step C, electing one measuring point, as a critical measuring point, which has achieved the lowest temperature at the second heating stage during heating among all the measuring points;

detecting heating condition of each of the heating sections in the second heating stage which may make said critical measuring point to satisfy both of the required upper end temperature that the object needs to achieve and the maximum temperature that the object should no go over, by simulating temperature of the critical measuring point by using the corresponding heating characteristic value for each of the measuring locations in the second heating stage based on a predetermined algorithm,

confirming whether or not any of the detected heating conditions at the detecting step meet targeted heating temperature and heating time that the object needs to clear for fulfilling the purpose of heating (confirmation step D);

when none of the detected heating conditions meet the targeted heating temperature and heating time at the confirmation step D, modifying the heating condition by lengthening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures either from the step of electing the critical measuring point or from the confirmation step A;

when any one of the detected heating conditions meet the targeted heating temperature and heating time at the confirmation step D, confirming whether such detected heating condition(s) meet other required conditions of allowable limited temperature and time that the object may endure during heating (confirmation step E);

when none of the detected heating condition(s) meet the allowable limited temperature and time at the confirmation step E, modifying the heating condition by shortening the heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature at each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures either from the step of electing the critical measuring point or from the confirmation step A;

when any one of the detected heating condition (s) meet the allowable limited temperature and time at the confirmation step E, temporarily electing one detected heating condition that has cleared the allowable limited temperature and time requirement by the

shortest time among all the detected heating condition(s) as the appropriate heating condition for satisfying the required temperature profile;

confirming whether all the other measuring points meet the required conditions of the second heating stage by simulating temperatures under the temporarily elected heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic values of the other measuring points (confirmation step F);

when any of the measuring points do not meet the required conditions of the second heating stage at the confirmation step F, modifying the temporarily elected heating condition by shortening heating time based on a predetermined rule and simulating temperature of each measuring point under the modified heating condition by using the corresponding heating characteristic value, and repeating the above procedures either from the step of electing the critical measuring point or from the confirmation step A; and

when all the measuring points meet the required conditions for the second heating stage at the confirmation step F, determining that the temporarily elected heating condition is appropriate for satisfying the required temperature profile.

2321. A program according to claim 2220, wherein when none of heating conditions for the critical measuring point could meet the targeted heating temperature and time requirement at the confirmation step D during the course of the repeated procedures after it was found at the confirmation step F that none of the measuring points meet the required conditions of the second heating stage, and modification of the heating condition was made by shortening heating time, the program further includes a logic of determining approximately appropriate heating condition by lengthening the heating time of the latest temporarily elected heating condition based on a predetermined rule.

2422. A program according to claim 2220, wherein the program further includes a logic of making a judgment that determining appropriate heating condition for heating the object in accordance with the required temperature profile is impossible when number of repeating procedures in a closed loop at any of the confirmation steps A-F exceeds a predetermined times.

2523. A program according to claim 2220, wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein ln is natural logarithm, T_a is heating temperature of the measuring location of the heating furnace, T_{int} is initial temperature of the measuring point of the object at the measuring location, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated at the measuring location,

and t is heating time at the measuring location,

and simulating temperature of each of measuring point using the corresponding heating characteristic value is made based on a following basic equation for heating:

$$T_s = T_a - (T_a - T_{int}) e^{-m \cdot t}$$

wherein e in the equation represents the base of natural logarithms.

2624. A program according to claim 2220, wherein the predetermined rule for lowering the heating temperature when temperature of the elected measuring point is over the required conditions at the confirmation step A is either lowering the heating temperature down to the upper end temperature of the allowable range of the required heating conditions, or lowering the heating temperature by an amount obtained by multiplying a certain ratio to a temperature difference identified between the measured or simulated temperature and the upper end temperature of the allowable range.

2725. A program according to claim 2220, wherein the predetermined rule for raising or lowering the heating temperature when heating time of the elected measuring point falls short of or goes over the required conditions at the confirmation step B is either raising or lowering the heating temperature of the particular heating section(s) by a predetermined amount, which particular heating section(s) are those located in advance of the heating section where temperature of the elected measuring point reaches the allowable range of the required conditions.

2826. A program according to claim 2220, wherein the predetermined rule for lengthening heating time when any one of the measuring points does not meet the required conditions at the confirmation step C is to multiply preceding transfer speed of the object with a ratio closest to 1 among the ratios of required heating time versus measured or simulated heating time for each of the measuring points which failed to meet the required conditions; or to divide the preceding heating time by the same ratio.

2927. A program according to claim 2220, wherein the predetermined algorithm for detecting heating conditions for making the critical measuring point to satisfy both of the required upper end temperature and the maximum temperature is configured by the steps of:
creating combinations of heating condition of at least two heating sections by raising respective heating temperatures independently by every predetermined amount from the initial temperature of the object at the beginning of the heating section up to a predetermined upper limit temperature defined by the heating furnace;

simulating temperature of the critical measuring point under each of the created combinations of the heating condition, and developing temperature profiles corresponding to

each of the combinations of the heating condition; and

detecting any of the combinations of the heating condition which may make the corresponding simulated temperature to locate inside a zone defined by said at least two heating sections, which zone is surrounded by an upper boundary and a lower boundary, wherein the upper boundary comprising an temperature increase line between a point H of an initial temperature of the preceding heating section and a point E of the maximum temperature at the end of the same heating section as well as a line of the maximum temperature between said point E and a point G at the end of said at least two heating sections, while the lower boundary comprising a line between said point H and a point F of the required upper end temperature at the end of said at least two heating sections.

3028. A program according to claim 2220, wherein the predetermined rule for lengthening the heating time when none of the heating conditions meet the required time conditions at the confirmation step D is to multiply preceding transfer speed of the object with a ratio closest to 1 among the ratios of the heating time at the targeted heating temperature versus corresponding simulated time for each of the measuring points which failed to meet the required conditions, or to divide the preceding heating time by the same ratio.

3129. A program according to claim 2220, wherein the predetermined rule for shortening the heating time when none of the heating conditions meet the required time conditions at the confirmation step E is to multiply preceding transfer speed of the object with a ratio closest to 1 among the ratios of heating time at the allowable limited temperature versus corresponding simulated time for each of the measuring points which failed to meet the required conditions, or to divide the preceding heating time by the same ratio.

3230. A program according to claim 2220, wherein the predetermined rule for shortening the heating time when any of the heating conditions do not meet the required conditions at the confirmation step F is to multiply preceding transfer speed of the object with a ratio closest to 1 among the ratios of the heating time at the targeted heating temperature versus corresponding simulated time, or among the ratios of the heating time at the allowable limited temperature versus corresponding simulated time for each of the measuring points which failed to meet the required condition, or to divide the preceding heating time by the same ratio.

3331. A program according to claim 2220, wherein in addition to overall required conditions for heating the object which are to be applied equally to any part of the object, individual required conditions are separately determined which are to be applied to corresponding each of the measuring points of the object individually, and the program further includes a logic for

making a judgment that even if the heating condition does not meet some requirements of the overall required conditions at some measuring points, such heating conditions are deemed appropriate as far as said individual required conditions to be applied to those particular measuring points are satisfied.

3432. A computer readable recording medium recording a program for making a computer to process steps of determining appropriate heating condition for heating an object in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to required conditions for heating the object, wherein said program is defined by claim 2220.

3533. An apparatus for performing thermal analysis to be used for heating an object in a heating furnace, comprising a input means, a memory and a processor,

wherein said input means obtains information of heating temperature and heating time of the heating furnace and temperature of the object,

said memory stores a logic for calculating heating characteristic value, and a basic equation for heating or a logic for calculating temperature of the object to be heated by using said heating characteristic value as well as the heating temperature and heating time, and

said processor calculates either said heating characteristic value or temperature of the object corresponding to the heating temperature and the heating time, by using said logics and said basic equation for heating stored in the memory.

3634. An apparatus according to claim 3533, wherein the apparatus further comprises a reading means for reading recording medium, wherein the processor determines appropriate heating condition including heating temperature and heating time, which may satisfy the required conditions of the object to be heated, by using the required conditions for heating the object obtained by the input means, algorithm that the reading means obtained by reading the recording medium, and the heating characteristic value calculated by the processor.

3735. An apparatus according to claim 3533, wherein said heating characteristic value is an m-value defined by:

$$m = \frac{1}{t} \ln \left[\frac{T_a - T_{int}}{T_a - T_s} \right]$$

wherein ln is natural logarithm, T_a is the heating temperature, T_{int} is initial temperature of the object, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated, and t is the heating time.

3836. An apparatus according to claim 3533, wherein said basic equation for heating is defined by:

$$T_s = T_a - (T_a - T_{int}) e^{-m \cdot t}$$

wherein T_a is the heating temperature, T_{int} is initial temperature of the object, T_s is achieved temperature when the object is heated, t is the heating time, e is the base of natural logarithms, and m is the heating characteristic value.

3937. A heat controller for determining appropriate heating condition including heating temperature and heating time for each of heating sections structured in a heating furnace, and for controlling the heating furnace based on such determined appropriate heating condition so as to heat an object in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to required conditions for heating the object, said controller comprising an input means, an output means, a memory, a processor and a reading means for reading recording media,

wherein the controller controls the heating furnace by reading recording medium defined by claim 3432.

4038. A heating furnace for heating an object introduced into the furnace in accordance with a required temperature profile corresponding to required conditions for heating the object, said heating furnace comprising at least one heating section, a heat source provided to each of the heating sections for heating the object, and a heat controller capable of controlling heating condition for each of the heating sections,

wherein said heat controller is defined by claim 3937.

4439. A heating furnace according to claim 4038, wherein said heating furnace is either one of reflow furnace, heat treatment furnace, sintering furnace, baking oven, melting furnace, and incinerating equipment.

4240. A method of thermal analysis, wherein cooling characteristic of at least one measuring point of an object at one measuring location of a cooling equipment is determined as a single invariable by using temperature measured at said at least one measuring point of the object as well as cooling temperature and cooling time at the at least one measuring location of the cooling apparatus, which cooling characteristic represents physical characteristics of both of the cooling equipment and the object to be cooled, wherein appropriate cooling condition of a cooling equipment for cooling the object in accordance with a required temperature profile is determined by using the determined invariables.

~~43. A method according to claim 42, wherein appropriate cooling condition of a cooling equipment for cooling the object in accordance with a required temperature profile is determined by using the determined invariables.~~